

Stafford Borough Council
Planning Department
Civic Offices
Riverside
Stafford
ST16 3AQ

For the attention of Mr. J. Dolman

30 September 2014



Dear Mr. Dolman

Ref: Planning Application No. 14/20863/OUT 101 Houses at Hixon

The Hixon Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group wishes to register its objection to the above planning application.

In May 2014, the Steering Group delivered an eleven page questionnaire to all 770 households in Hixon parish area, including Lea Heath and Pasturefields. 460 completed questionnaires, equating to 59.7%, were returned; a huge response by any measure.

The Steering Group accepted that Hixon should take its proportion of the 1200 new dwellings to be built in the eleven key service village over the lifetime (2011 to 2031) of the adopted Plan for Stafford. An equal division of the 1200 new dwellings across the KSVs would mean each having to accommodate approximately 110 properties over a twenty year period.

Notwithstanding that Hixon, by population is the sixth largest KSV, the Steering Group recommended a total of 125 new properties in Hixon parish up to 2031. Before the questionnaires were delivered a planning application for 76 houses off New Road, Hixon (Application 13/19249OUT) was approved by Stafford Borough Council planning committee.

The Steering Group revised the questionnaire to reflect this change and asked households whether they thought 50 new houses over the next 17 years was appropriate. The questionnaire also asked whether housing developments should be restricted in scale to a maximum of 20 to 30 units.

In answer to the first question about 50 new dwellings, 61% of respondents thought a combined total of 76 already approved in New Road, plus 50 new houses, was the right amount, 26% thought this was too many and 6% thought it was too few.

When asked about the size of new housing development being limited to a maximum of 20 to 30 units, 60% thought this about right; 25% thought too many and 7% thought too few.

Other data from the returned Hixon Neighbourhood Plan questionnaires is currently being analysed, including a survey of local amenities, services and facilities.

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Secretary: Mrs. Catherine Gill, 79 Sycamore Drive, Hixon, Stafford ST18 0NF
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It is abundantly clear that the application for 101 new houses at the Green Man is against the wishes of the people of Hixon.

In addition to the 76 houses already approved, twelve further houses have been approved in Hall Farm Close and three in Puddle Hill. Furthermore, and as you will know, there are other planning applications pending for housing developments in Hixon, including 30 off Church Road and 10 in Egg Lane.

In total, the potential for housing development in Hixon could already add up to 141, plus seven rural exception houses planned in Church Lane.

Application 14/20863 for 'up to' 101 houses is:

- Unacceptable to a majority of Hixon residents;
- At odds with the emerging Hixon Neighbourhood Plan;
- Contrary to the adopted Plan for Stafford.

The Government's Locality Act demands that the views of the local people are taken into account when large-scale major housing development is proposed in THEIR community. Developers may have the financial clout to try and railroad through their avaricious plans, but they do not have the right to try and crush local communities into submission.

The adopted Plan for Stafford was approved by a Government Inspector and should be robustly defended so that Hixon, and other Key Service Villages are not swamped with excessive housing developments. The Plan for Stafford is a twenty year plan with seventeen more years to go.

It is accepted that 10,300 houses need to be completed in Stafford Borough before 2031, with 1200 in the eleven key service villages. But not only the number should be controlled, the rate of development should also be regulated. It is a long distance plan, not a sprint to approve as many as possible as quickly as possible.

Continued...

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The Hixon Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group also supports other points of objection including:

- By its scale, the proposed development would be unsustainable in relation to the amenities currently available in Hixon;
- It would be a significant intrusion into open countryside with an unacceptable visual impact detracting from the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- The width of the road (Stowe Lane) between Hixon and Stowe-by-Chartley is unsuitable for a development of this scale. The proposed point of access is in a 60mph section of road;
- The illustrative layout, design (particularly 2.5 storey town houses) and density of the proposed development is unacceptable and at odds with the low density, low level (mainly bungalows) which characterise the Stowe Lane, Greenfields and Back Lane areas of Hixon.

For all the foregoing reasons, and other objections put forward by Hixon Parish Council and residents, the Hixon Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group objects most strongly to planning application 14/20863.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Gill
Secretary